



**File Code: 1950**

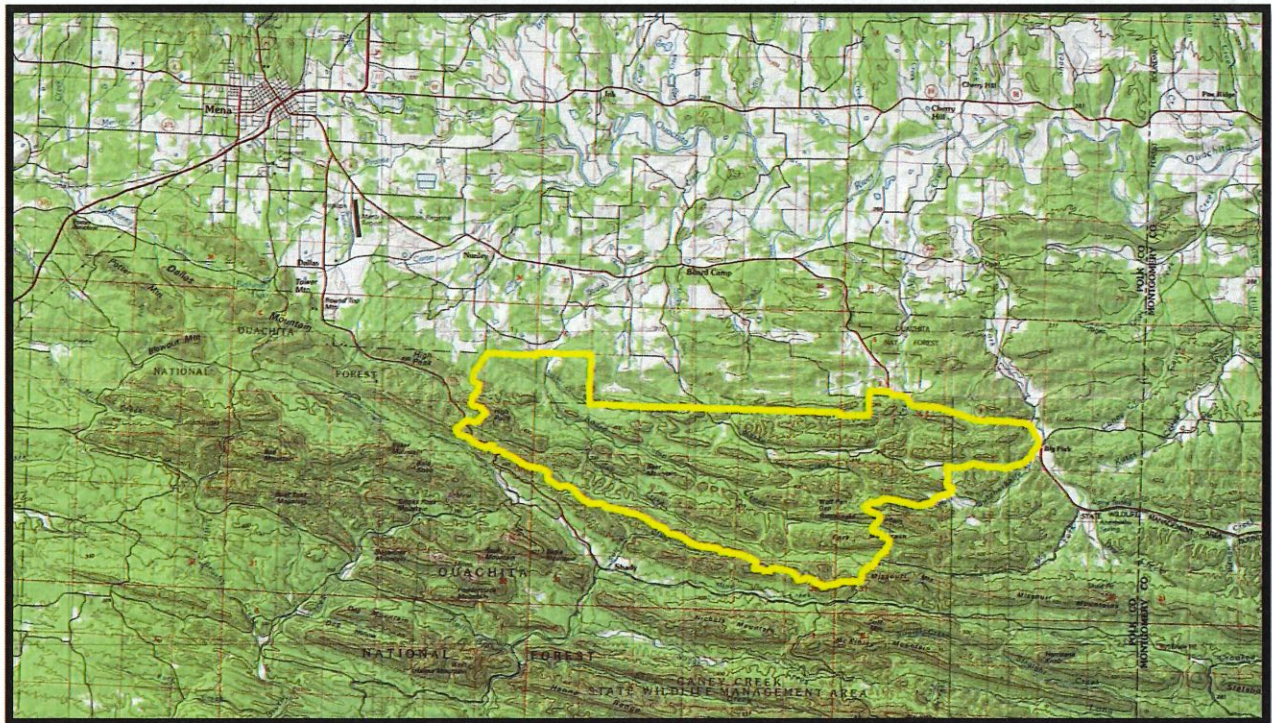
**Date: November 21, 2019**

Dear Forest Stakeholder:

This project announcement letter serves to initiate scoping, “an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed” (40 CFR 1501.7). I request your input on the following proposed actions regarding management of the Board Camp Project Area.

Board Camp is located on the Mena Ranger District. It is within United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service Region 8 (Southern Region) and is part of the Ouachita National Forest (ONF). The Board Camp Project Area includes approximately 16,284 acres or about 25 square miles; of which 3,395 acres within the project area is privately owned land.

The analysis area for Board Camp is composed of Compartments 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917 and 919. Geographically, the project area is primarily to the south of Mena, Arkansas, in Township 3S, Range 28W, Sections 7,8, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 30, and 31 and T3S, R29W, Sections 7, 13-18, 19-24, 25-29 and 35-36, T3S, R30W Sections 11-14 and 24 in Polk County, Arkansas.







## Proposed Action

The Mena-Oden Ranger District proposes to implement management activities identified in Table 1 to meet the needs for Board Camp Project Area. The intent of these activities is to move the project area toward desired conditions described in and adopted by the Ouachita National Forest Revised Land and Resource Management Plan (Revised Forest Plan) and to partially meet the objectives established by it.

**Table 1: Proposed Board Camp Watershed Project Area Activities**

ACTIVITY	APPROXIMATE TREATMENT AREA (acres unless noted)
Commercial Thinning (acres)	1,173
Plantation Thinning (acres)	491
Seed-tree with Reserves/Even-aged Management (acres)	585
Site Preparation by Prescribed Fire, Herbicide, Manual, and/or Mechanical Methods (acres)	585
Hand Planting with Shortleaf Pine (acres)	585
Timber Stand Improvement (Release) by Herbicide and/or Manual Methods (acres)	585
Timber Stand Improvement (Precommercial Thinning) by Manual Methods (acres)	585
Stocking/TSI Certification Checks (acres)	585
Fuel Reduction Prescribed Burning – in Site Prep and Wildlife Stand Improvement Units (acres)	2,149
Shale Borrow pits (acres)	2
Wildlife Pond Rehabilitation (ponds)	4
Wildlife Opening Rehabilitation (acres)	16
Wildlife Stand improvement midstory reduction (acres)	1,564
Temporary Road Construction (miles)	11
Road Maintenance (miles)	37
Trail Maintenance (miles)	32
Road Relocation (miles)	1
Non-Native, Invasive Species Eradication by Herbicide and/or Manual Methods (acres)	12,889 <sup>1</sup>



Soil and Water Restoration (miles)	1
Resource Protection Gates (openings and ponds)	As needed
Unauthorized Roads– Close and Decommission	As needed
Install Gates or Berms	As needed
Firewood Areas	As needed

1-This figure represents the total area of National Forest System lands that could be subject to non-native, invasive species eradication. The actual area of non-native, invasive species eradication needs are unknown at this time but are estimated to be approximately 1-5% of this figure.

**Table 2: Percentage of project area by management area (National Forest System Lands)**

### **Need for Action**

The Revised Forest Plan provides primary direction for all management activities and contains the *Vision, Strategy, and Standards* for guiding all natural resource management activities for the Ouachita National Forest. Board Camp includes the following Management Areas: Management Area 9 (Water and Riparian), and Management Area 14 (Ouachita Mountains).

This proposed action would implement the following Revised Forest Plan direction.

### **Desired Conditions for Board Camp:**

#### ***Manage Forest Transportation System***

The road system needs management activities in order to protect soil, water, and wildlife resources; reduce road-related barriers to aquatic organism passage; and to provide access to stands within the project area. Needed management activities include relocating portions of Road 549 due to steep slopes and obliterating an old temporary road that exists from a previous entry; construction of temporary roads; installing gates or other barriers on closed roads; obliterating unauthorized, user-created roads; and maintaining existing system roads (Map 3).

<i>Management Area</i>	
9	14
9%	91%

#### ***Improve Forest Health***

Opportunities for the creation of early seral habitat by seed-tree with reserves/even-aged management have been identified on 585 acres. Stand-establishment activities (including site-preparation and planting) and stand-improvement activities (including release and precommercial thinning) are needed on these acres as well. Additional opportunities for the reduction in stocking by commercial thinning (1,173 acres) and plantation thinning have been identified on (491 acres) (Map 1).





The majority of treatments would be in stands classified as overstocked. Stocking reduction would reduce the potential for insects, diseases, and wildfires; increase timber growth and yield; stimulate rapid development of foraging habitat; improve forest health; and increase herbaceous plant species diversity in an effort to meet Revised Forest Plan desired conditions.

***Maintain or Restore Community Diversity and Reduce Fuel Loads of National Forest System Lands***

Reduction of existing fuel loading is needed within the project area in order to maintain and/or restore various ecosystem types (e.g., Ouachita Shortleaf Pine-Oak Forest, Ouachita Dry-Mesic Oak Forest, etc.). A prescribed fire program that mimics the natural fire regime is an important management tool for restoring and maintaining most of these communities and providing for patch connectivity among the interspersed communities. Within Board Camp, prescribed burn units have been identified equaling approximately 2,149 acres (Map 2).

***Maintain Full Range of Natural Systems Found Within the Ouachita National Forest***

Special emphasis to conserve and restore Ouachita Shortleaf Pine-Oak Forest, shale glade, riparian, and other communities through thinning, mid-story reduction, selected herbicide treatment, and/or prescribed fire has been identified as part of the purpose and need for this project area.

***Maintain or Enhance Designated Beneficial Uses of Water***

Stream crossing restoration would aid in aquatic organism passage. Restoration of stream habitats may occur within the Board Camp project area. Rehabilitation of 4 existing wildlife pond (¼ to ½-acre in size) is also needed within the project area (Map 2).

***Maintain or Improve Long Term Soil Productivity***

Unauthorized, user-created, all-terrain vehicle (ATV) and off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails are impacting long-term soil productivity and need stabilization. Unauthorized dispersed campsites impacting resources may be closed or rehabilitated in an effort to improve long-term, soil productivity.

***Supply Commodity and Commercial Uses***

There is need to provide a sustained yield of high-quality, wood products at a level consistent with sound, economic principles. Hardwood, firewood-collection areas may be made available to the public in order to improve utilization of those products.

***Supply a Spectrum of Recreational Facilities and Opportunities***

Conventional, motorized use is provided for in construction standards and design of facilities. Opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized forms of recreation may also be provided.



Hiking, equestrian use, mountain-bike riding, dispersed camping, OHV (mainly 4-wheelers and dirt-bikes) use, hunting, and driving for pleasure are the predominant recreational activities.

### ***Eradication of Non-Native, Invasive Species***

Elimination of non-native, invasive species (e.g. tall fescue, sericea lespedeza, autumn olive, honey suckle, privet, etc.) is needed throughout the Board Camp project area including but not limited to open areas, timber stands, temporary roads, closed roads, trails, and Forest Service System Roads.

### **Invitation to Participate in Project Planning**

Scoping is not limited to a single point in time. We will continue to accept and consider comments until an implementation decision is made. With that said, your comments will be most helpful if they are received early in the process. They will help us identify environmental issues associated with implementation and alternative ways to meet Revised Forest Plan objectives and desired conditions. Your involvement will enable us to better assess public concerns.

Comments received in response to this solicitation—including names and addresses of those who comment—will become a part of the public record for this proposed action. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered. However, anonymous comments will not provide the Forest Service with the ability to provide the respondent with subsequent environmental documents.

### **Objection Process**

This project is subject to subparts A and B of 36 *CFR Part 218 Project-Level Predecisional Administrative Review Process* (objection process). It is not authorized under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA).

The designated opportunity for public comment in response to this solicitation is ***November 21, 2019 through December 23, 2019***. Providing specific, written comments during this time will afford you standing to later file an objection to this project should you so desire (see Upcoming Project Planning Steps).

Pursuant to §218.2, specific written comments should be within the scope of the proposed action; have a direct relationship to the proposed action; and must include supporting reasons for the responsible official to consider.

### **How to Comment**

Specific, written comments must be submitted to: Tim Oosterhous, Mena-Oden District Ranger, ***1603 Hwy 71 North, Mena, AR, 71953, Fax: 479-394-2389***. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Electronic comments must be submitted in a common, digital format to [comments-southern-ouachita-mena-oden@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-southern-ouachita-mena-oden@fs.fed.us).





### Upcoming Project Planning Steps

As stated above, your comments will help us identify issues, and they will be used to formulate alternatives to this proposal. An environmental analysis will be conducted, and the results will be documented in an environmental assessment (EA).

Upon completion, the draft EA will be released for public review and comment. A 30-day notice and comment period pursuant to 36 CFR 218 will be initiated. This comment period will afford you another opportunity to obtain standing to later file an objection to the project should you desire.

An objection period, if required, will follow the regulation found in §218.7. Issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted, specific-written comments regarding this project and attributed to the objector unless the issue is based on new information that arose after a designated opportunity to comment (§218.8(c)).

If you have questions about this project or would like more information, please, contact **Jade Ryles** at (479) 394-2382 or [cjryles@fs.fed.us](mailto:cjryles@fs.fed.us).

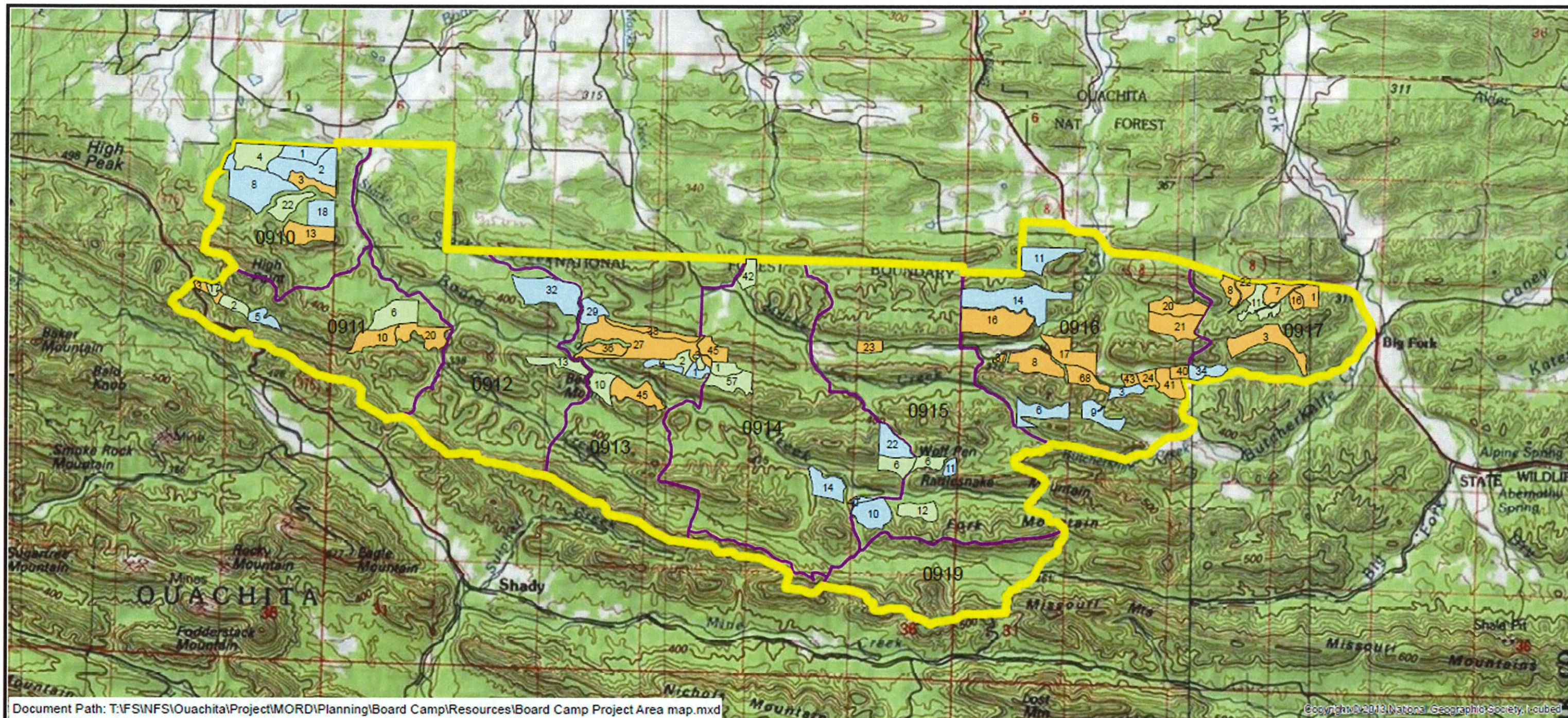
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tim Oosterhous".

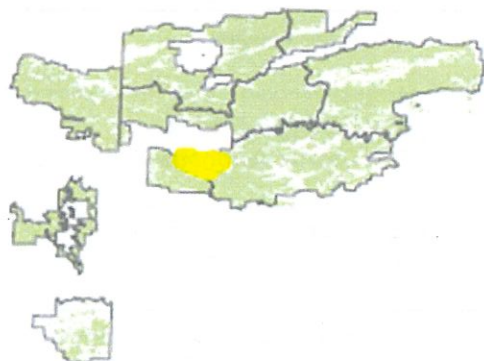
Tim Oosterhous  
District Ranger

See Attachments Map 1-3





Vicinity Map



The Forest Service uses the most current and complete data available. GIS data and product accuracy may vary. They may be developed from sources of differing accuracy, accurate only at certain scales, based on modeling or interpretation, and incomplete while being created or revised, etc. Using GIS products for purposes other than those for which they were created may yield inaccurate or misleading results. This information was released on the date shown below. The Forest Service reserves the right to correct, update, modify, or replace GIS products without notification. Designation of a road, trail or area for motor vehicle use by a particular class of vehicle under 36 CFR 212.51 is not represented on this map. It is the responsibility of the user to acquire the current Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM). The MVUM identifies those roads and trails designated for the motor vehicle use under 36 CFR 212.51 for the purpose of enforcing the prohibition at 36 CFR 261.13.

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

#### Legend

##### Rx

- Plantation Thin
- Seed Tree
- Commercial Thin
- Board Camp Project Area
- Board Camp Compartments

Sheet 1 of 1

Board Camp

Silviculture Activities

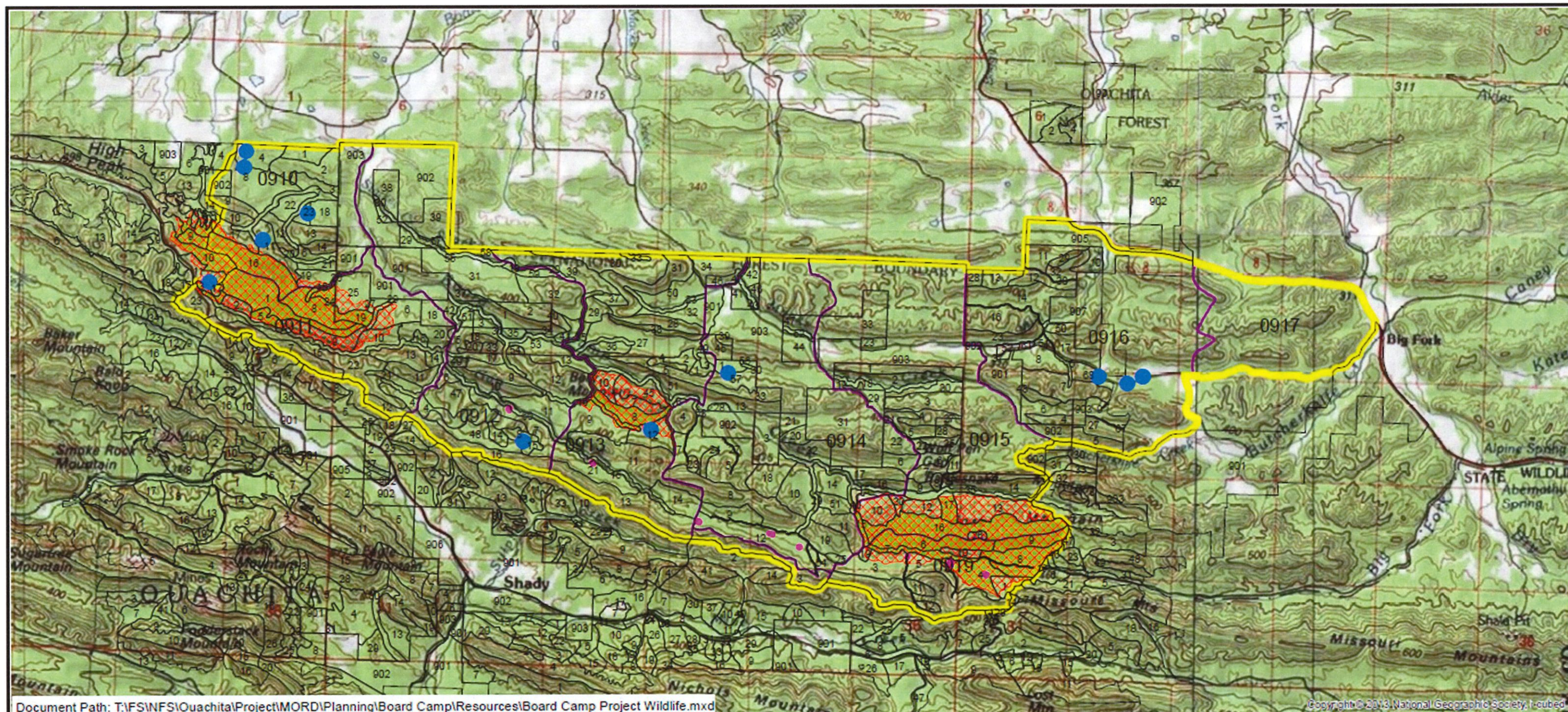
Mena Ranger District  
Polk County, Arkansas

U.S. Forest Service - R8  
Ouachita National Forest

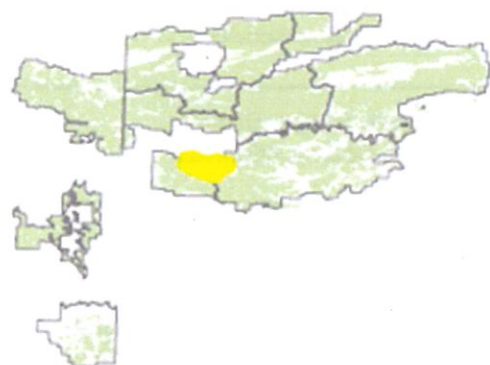
For more information, contact the Mena Ranger District at 1603 Hwy. 71 North, Mena, AR or phone (479) 394-2382

Date Saved: 11/18/2019 10:43:22 AM





Vicinity Map



The Forest Service uses the most current and complete data available. GIS data and product accuracy may vary. They may be developed from sources of differing accuracy, accurate only at certain scales, based on modeling or interpretation, and incomplete while being created or revised, etc. Using GIS products for purposes other than those for which they were created may yield inaccurate or misleading results. This information was released on the date shown below. The Forest Service reserves the right to correct, update, modify, or replace GIS products without notification. Designation of a road, trail or area for motor vehicle use by a particular class of vehicle under 36 CFR 212.51 is not represented on this map. It is the responsibility of the user to acquire the current Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM). The MVUM identifies those roads and trails designated for the motor vehicle use under 36 CFR 212.51 for the purpose of enforcing the prohibition at 36 CFR 261.13.

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

#### Legend

- Board Camp Pond Rehabilitation
- Board Camp Stands
- Board Camp Wildlife Opening Rehabilitation
- Board Camp Prescribed Burning Units
- Board Camp Wildlife Stand Improvement
- Board Camp Project Area
- Board Camp Compartments

Sheet 1 of 1

Board Camp

Wildlife Activities

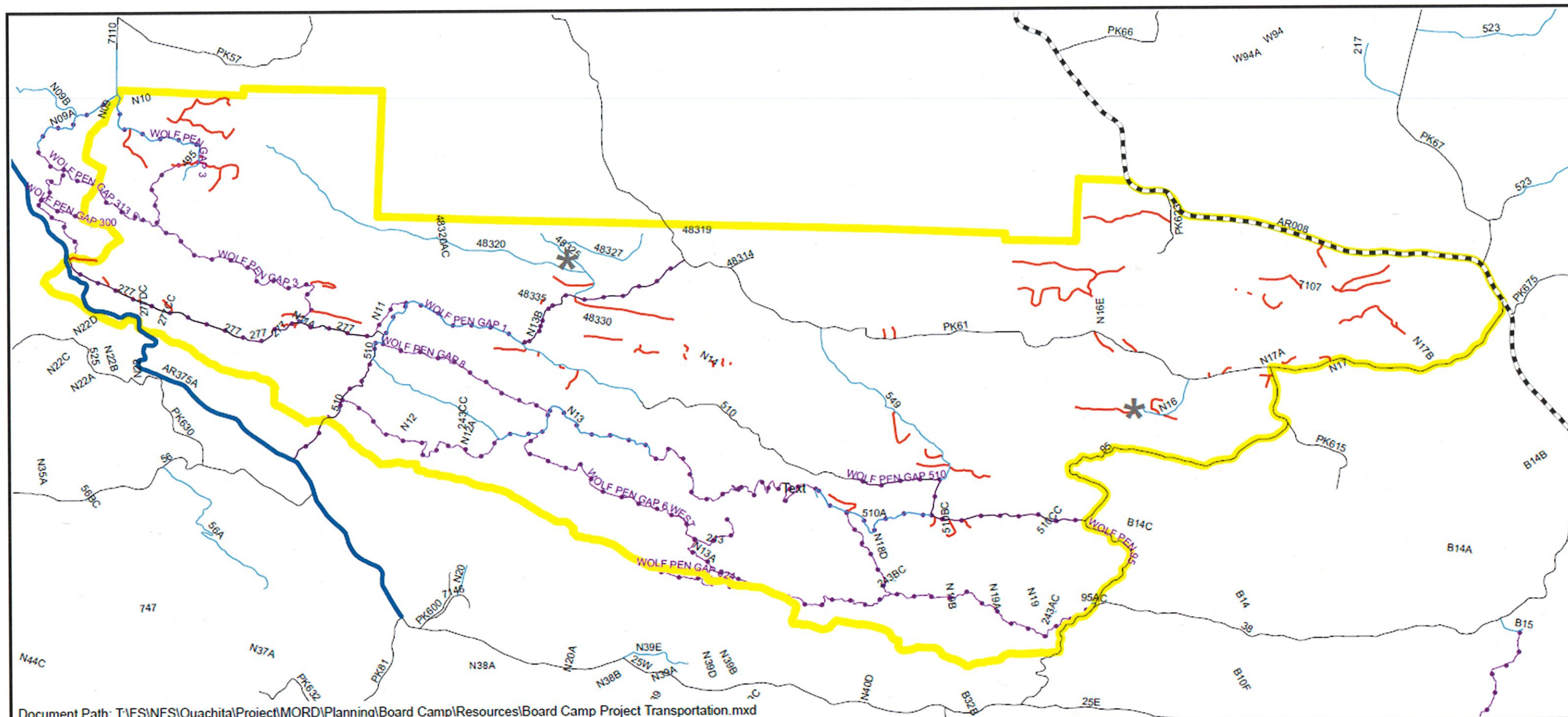
Mena Ranger District  
Polk County, Arkansas

U.S. Forest Service - R8  
Ouachita National Forest

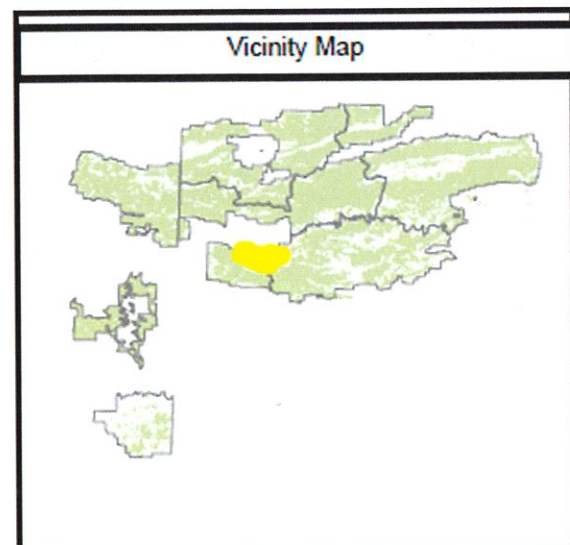
For more information, contact the Mena  
Ranger District at 1603 Hwy. 71 North,  
Mena, AR or phone (479) 394-2382

Date Saved: 11/18/2019 12:31:45 PM





Document Path: T:\FS\NFS\Ouachita\Project\MORD\Planning\Board Camp\Resources\Board Camp Project Transportation.mxd



The Forest Service uses the most current and complete data available. GIS data and product accuracy may vary. They may be developed from sources of differing accuracy, accurate only at certain scales, based on modeling or interpretation, and incomplete while being created or revised, etc. Using GIS products for purposes other than those for which they were created may yield inaccurate or misleading results. This information was released on the date shown below. The Forest Service reserves the right to correct, update, modify, or replace GIS products without notification. Designation of a road, trail or area for motor vehicle use by a particular class of vehicle under 36 CFR 212.51 is not represented on this map. It is the responsibility of the user to acquire the current Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM). The MVUM identifies those roads and trails designated for the motor vehicle use under 36 CFR 212.51 for the purpose of enforcing the prohibition at 36 CFR 261.13.

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

#### Legend

##### Operator Maintenance Level

- 2 - HIGH CLEARANCE VEHICLES
- 3 - SUITABLE FOR PASSENGER CARS
- 4 - MODERATE DEGREE OF USER COMFORT
- 5 - HIGH DEGREE OF USER COMFORT
- Temporary Roads
- Board Camp Project Area
- National Forest Trail
- ✱ Shell Borrow Pits

Date Saved: 11/19/2019 4:20:33 PM

Sheet 1 of 1

Board Camp
Transportation Activities
Mena Ranger District Polk County, Arkansas
U.S. Forest Service - R8 Ouachita National Forest
For more information, contact the Mena Ranger District at 1603 Hwy. 71 North, Mena, AR or phone (479) 394-2382



